

# Young Hearts

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## Young Hearts by Val\_Creative

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**Summary:**

It's just a glimpse, but Richie's eyes land on an pale, identical scar to Eddie's palm. He has a wild impulse to press his lips against it, over and over, to remind Eddie they're bound by blood and promises and *love* — and Richie, for once, keeps silent about his thoughts.

# Young Hearts

## Author's Note:

Partial inspiration.

The rating is M for the HIGHLY explicit language only. There's no sexual content, and I've put that in the tags too. Feel free to skip over my bottom author's note. It's not necessary for you to read it!

My two Halloweeny playlists for sharing and listening: **halloween spooky time** (traditionally Halloween and more popular songs) and **boils and ghouls** (the creepier and unsettling supernatural and horror-themed songs)

\*

It's too damn easy to be the center of attention.

Richie shelters himself in the familiarity of his jokes accompanied by peals of laughter and fleeting, entertained admiration. None of the other teenagers *care* about his past. What's happened to him or the Loser's Club... as far as Derry is concerned, nothing happened.

Nobody knows the truth.

Richie's thumb slides absently over the the faint, pale scar. It goes right across his palm, and he remembers how it felt like slickened in his own blood. (His mom or dad never asked him where he got it — not that they would *care*.)

He perches himself on the granite kitchen counter-top, accepting a newly opened beer can from Bethany B. Madison, a junior and a frequent attender of the neighborhood basement parties. Richie blows her an exaggerated, winking kiss, as she rolls her eyes and someone

else catcalls loudly. Bethany presses herself closer anyway, twirling a stand of bleached-yellow hair, her hip warmly pushing on his.

There's a little bit of dried, crusty puke on the ash hardwood floor. Fake, bold autumn colors and paper cutouts of little black bats strung over the maple cabinets. Richie's left foot twitches inside his sneaker.

*Didja hear? Eddie Kaspbrak's in the hospital.*

An excitable buzz of voices. Richie's smile fades around the edges, his heart pounding erratically.

*Weren't you and him friends or something, Rich?*

(In another lifetime.)

Three years — three goddamn years without talking directly to Eddie or Bill or Ben or Mike or Beverly. He doesn't know how it happened or why. It just did. Stanley comes to Richie's birthday parties and vice versa, long enough to make an appearance and nod understandingly, before vanishing.

It's over.

No more nightmares — *no*. No more nightmares, waking up screaming at the top of his lungs, *and*—

"Where are you going?" Bethany calls out, now impatient and huffing. He leaps off the kitchen counter-top, tugging on his bomber jacket, and avoids eye-contact with her. "Hey, *hey*, get me another beer—"

"Get your own fucking beer," Richie snaps, ignoring the outburst of disapproving hoots and clapping.

\*

On his way out the spiderweb-decorated entrance door, he grabs a frosty cold, opened beer bottle left out.

Richie thinks he may have had too many, but wasn't planning on driving anyway. He doesn't even drive. The grass spins for a minute under Richie's feet, but he manages to keep completely upright. He mock-

salutes a nearby cop car with two fingers.

There's a mowed down pathway leading to some houses, the wheat field drenched in sunset colors. Richie shuffles through the fallen, amber leaves, spitting occasionally and gulping down a mouthful of ass-tasting beer.

Who the fuck *buys* this shit?

He remembers the Halloween during fifth grade, riding on his bike with Eddie over to his empty house and showing off his pumpkin masterpiece from the night before. Richie had been collecting his baby teeth, for a while, and proceeded to superglue them into his pumpkin's own mouth in a horrifically gawking, ghoulish smile.

Eddie almost *pissed* himself when Richie chased him in the hallway with the pumpkin, swearing and getting angry. It had been worth seeing both the fear *and* awe when Eddie got to inspect the pumpkin himself, lips thinning.

*Whaddya think?*

*Thanks, I hate it.*

*Ha! Fuck you, dude. You wouldn't know GREATNESS if it bit you on the testicles.*

*I mean... it's pretty cool-looking though...*

Sometimes that's all it took to light up Richie's world — a single, heartfelt chuckle. How Eddie's dimples popped against his usually exasperated or frowning expression. He wanted to see Eddie grin more than anything.

Richie stumbles over the curb, his thick-rimmed glasses bobbing on his nose.

"Look where... you're fuckin' going, asshole..." he says under his breath, to no one in particular.

A dog barks across the street. There's a couple of streetlights blinking on, and Richie follows them idly to the playground. He's the only one

stupid enough to get drunk out here, so Richie plops himself onto a swing, chugging his beer and groaning. He digs his toes into the woodchips, pushing himself back and forth idly, his stomach roiling.

Hospital...?

Eddie broke his arm once. Maybe he broke it again. Maybe he got sick... *maybe...*

*God fucking damn it, no*, Richie tells himself. The nightmares are over. And yet, he can see it as clear as day — being trapped inside the Neibolt House, frozen in horror as a dirtied mattress rips open and Eddie's head wiggles free.

*(Wanna play loogie?)*

He dreamed of Pennywise's hallucination for a whole week, for a month — the crimson, hot blood pouring out of Eddie's mouth, pooling onto the floorboards while Richie listened, panicked and frozen, to the sounds of his friend choking.

*Fuck you, fuck you, fuckyoufuckyoufuckyou*, Richie screams at his own memories, breathing out the words.

He drops his beer bottle and hunches over. Richie grips onto his face, breathing hard, rattling his glasses and skewing them. His clenched fingers shove into his hair and yank to feel the sharp sting of pain, to ground him.

*Eds—*

"Richie? Hey, you okay?" A pair of hands lightly touch over his shoulders.

The other teenage boy immediately backs off. Eddie gazes worriedly over Richie who gulps and sniffles, wiping under his nose.

"Uh..."

He doesn't think it's real. For a split second, Richie think he's going nuts.

"*The fuck...?*" Richie's mouth feels dry and swollen. He squints his eyes, correcting the angle of his glasses, looking Eddie up and down as if deeply scandalized. "*They'ssaid you were in the hospital.*"

Eddie frowns. "Yeah, my mom broke her ankle falling off a ladder," he says slowly. "I've been taking care of her—wait, are you *drunk?*"

A harsh, breathy laugh.

He doesn't care. He doesn't care if anyone sees. Richie leans over the shitty playground swing, wrapping his arms tightly around Eddie and burying his entire face into his shoulder. The soft and surprised noise rumbling out of Eddie's chest flushes all kinds of pleasant, marvelous heat throughout Richie's body.

Three *fucking* years...

"You scared the hell outta me. Eddie, fuck." Richie's voice is no more than a slurring muffle, but he feels Eddie's arms loop around his waist, shifting up his back as if consolingly him. "*I thought...*"

"I know what you thought." Eddie pulls away, solemnly meeting their eyes. "I'm okay. It's *all* okay now."

"You look like shit run over twice. Is that a normal look for you now or what?"

Eddie snorts aloud, the corner of his mouth lifting up. "Jesus, I almost forgot how much of a trashmouth you are, Trashmouth," he murmurs, shaking his head and hitting his fist against Richie's arm.

*Fuck.*

Richie feels like he's about to do something brave and stupid. So, so stupid.

A sneering, Richie Tozier classic grin.

"Mmn... I'll show you *trashmouth...*" he says lowly, clutching onto Eddie's polo and misjudging his distance, smacking his spit-sticky mouth against Eddie's upper lip. It's no more a kiss than inhaling and exhaling very closely together, their noses bumping gently.

Eddie's eyes flutter open. He doesn't push, or pull, or run away.

"Richie..."

Richie knows he probably smells like cigarettes and store-bought Hershey's chocolate and stale pumpkin-flavored beer. He knows he shouldn't have tried to kiss Eddie, but fuck *whatever* he's supposed to be doing. His life was better with Eddie *in* it, even with the fucking sewer clown.

He swallows, licking a row of his own teeth inside his mouth, and squeezes Eddie's chin teasingly.

"Wanna go carve pumpkins?" Richie asks, desperately trying to forget the *loneliness* howling inside him. "We can do self-portraits. It'll be like art class. You can carve yourself with spaghetti hair, Eddie Spaghetti."

It's worth seeing the lingering remnants of Eddie's grin.

"Or I can just babysit the town drunk for the rest of the night," Eddie says sarcastically, taking Richie's wrist. He leads Richie off the playground and towards the bright white-glow of the streetlights.

It's just a glimpse, but Richie's eyes land on the pale, identical scar to Eddie's palm.

He has a wild impulse to press his lips against it, over and over, to remind Eddie they're bound by blood and promises and *love* — and Richie, for once, keeps silent about his thoughts.

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### Author's Note:

(tw: CSA/COCSA mention) I had no idea if I was ever gonna write any fic for this movie... and I was so sure I wouldn't. But here we are. I'm actually really proud of myself for overcoming the struggle and all my bad traumatizing associations I couldn't let go of



regarding the It story. It's not Stephen King's fault I have CSA/COCSA, and I'm grown enough now to realize the only people to blame for hurting me was my abusers. I kept myself out of this fandom (and almost didn't see the movie) because I was terrified of getting reminders of what happened, and I didn't trust myself not to accidentally find it or slip back into the negative stuff I felt while reading the book. But I'm finally in a good enough headspace to not be clinging to those associations, and I lowkey/midkey like Reddie, so idk I feel proud that I could do at least one fic.

Anyway, if you enjoyed reading the fic please leave some thoughts! Thank you! ♥